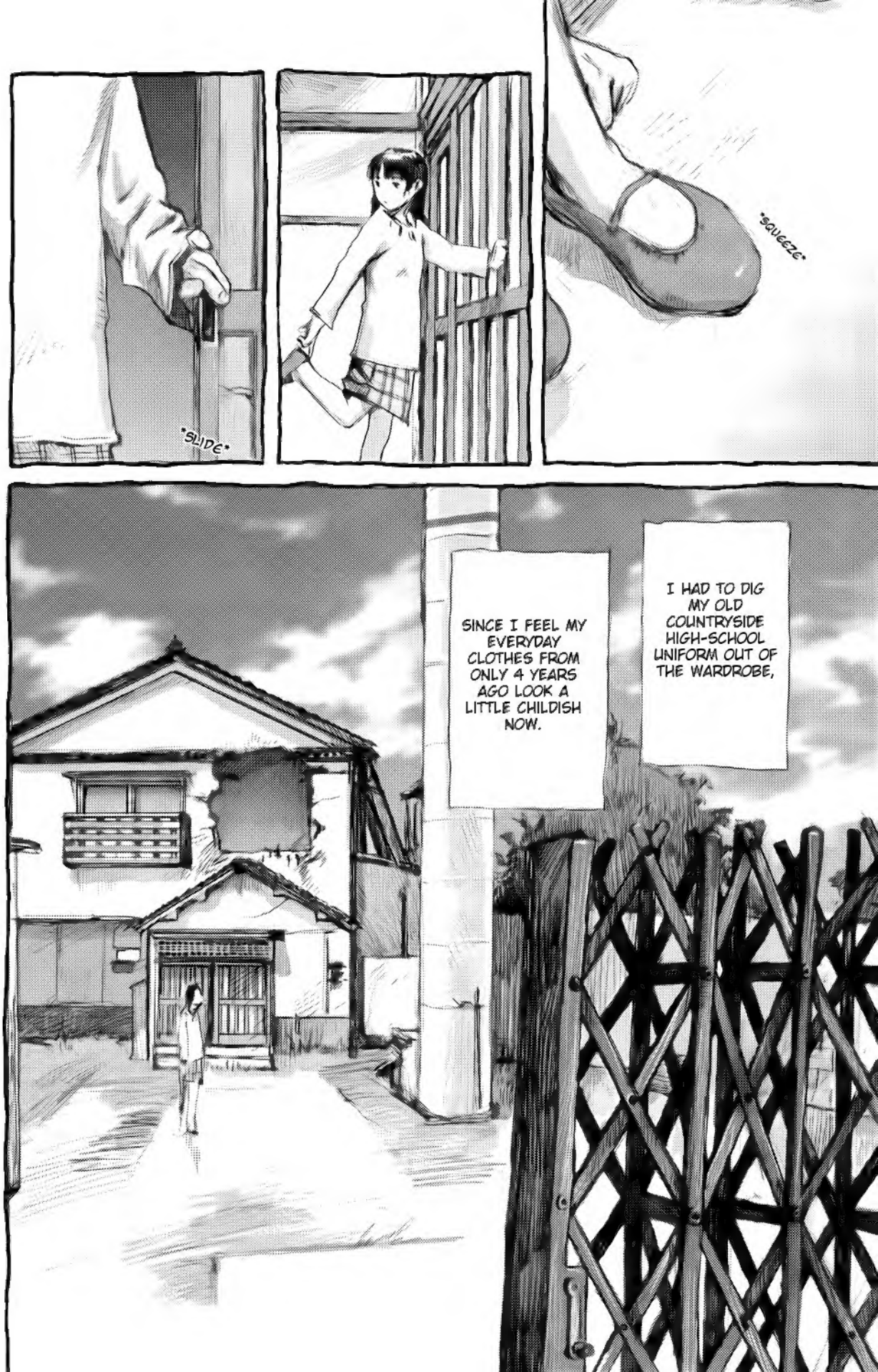
第3話-b

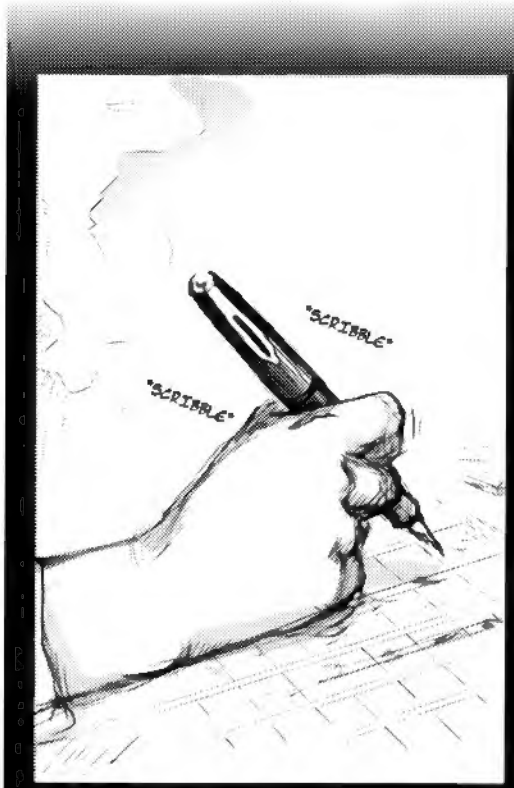

SLIDE
SQUEEZE
I HAD TO DIG MY OLD COUNTRYSIDE HIGH-SCHOOL UNIFORM OUT OF THE WARDROBE,
SINCE I FEEL MY EVERYDAY CLOTHES FROM ONLY 4 YEARS AGO LOOK A LITTLE CHILDISH NOW.

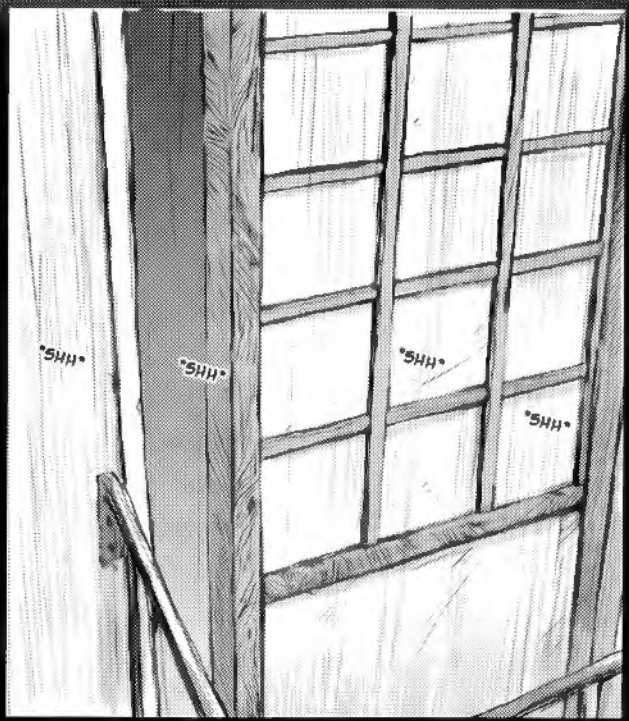
Dairy
I LIVED IN THIS VILLAGE UNTIL I TURNED 7.
BACK THEN, THE ALIENS IN THE CRATER WERE UNUSUALLY SOUGHT-AFTER IN THE SURROUND-ING CRATER DISTRICT.
BUT THESE MEMORIES ARE RARE.
"DRIP"
SINCE MY DAD SUDDENLY PASSED AWAY, I WAS THE ONLY ONE WITH MY MOTHER WHEN SHE GAVE BIRTH TO MY SICKLY YOUNGER BROTHER.
MY MOTHER ENTRUSTED ENOHARA BATHS TO AN ELDERLY COUPLE THAT SHE KNEW, THEN WE MOVED BACK TO HER HOMETOWN.

"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"

...RAIN, HUH.

"SHH"
Tokiwa Liqu
SUZUORI
I SHOULD HAVE GONE BACK AND BROUGHT AN UMBRELLA.
AND AFTER I WENT THROUGH THE TROUBLE OF DRYING THIS.


"SCRIBBLE"
"SCRIBBLE"

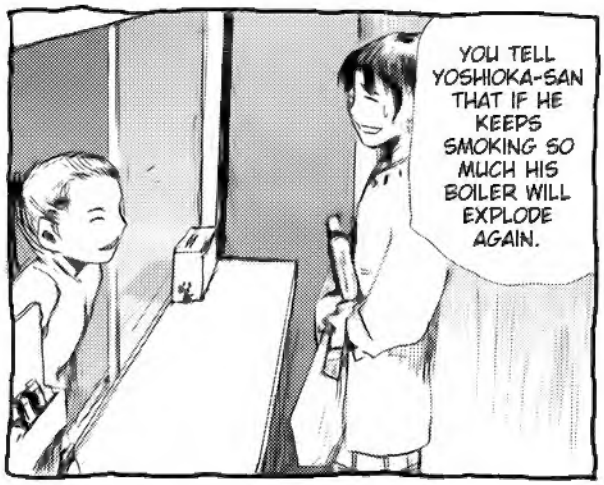

"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"

MY FATHER, WHENEVER HE HAD FREE TIME FROM WORK, OFTEN SPENT IT WRITING A COMPLICATED BOOK IN THE 2ND FLOOR WORKROOM (THE SAME ROOM NIEA AND I LIVE IN NOW). IT SEEMED LIKE HE WAS ALWAYS IN MIDDLE OF A CLOUD OF CIGARETTE SMOKE THERE.

MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF MY FATHER HAVE BECOME BLURRY AND DISTANT NOW, AS IF THEY THEMSELVES WERE ENVELOPED IN CIGARETTE SMOKE.

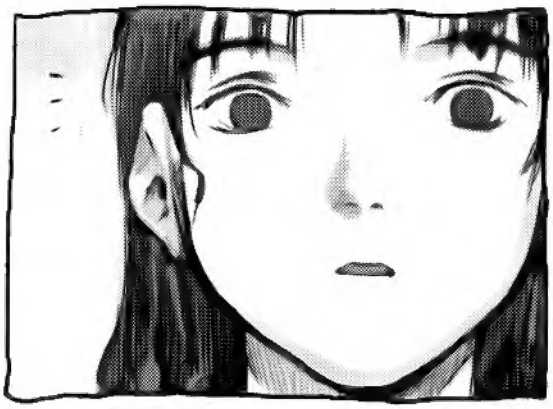
ALTHOUGH MY MOTHER TOLD ME NOT TO ENTER, I LIKED TO WATCH MY FATHER FROM BEHIND AS HE STRUGGLED WITH THE WRITING PAPER AMIDST THE SMOKE. WHEN HE PUT DOWN HIS BRUSH, HE'D LOOK OVER HIS SHOULDER, TAKE ME ON HIS KNEE AND MURMUR VARIOUS THINGS TO ME. HE WAS A HARD TO PLEASE AND YET GENTLE FATHER.

AH, IT MUST BE FOR YOSHIOKA-SAN AT ENOHARA BATHS, RIGHT?
Would you like your name on the lighter?
¥1,000 bills accepted
TOBACCO FOR A KISERU PIPE?
SO ARE YOU LODGING OVER THERE?
AH, YEAH.
HMM, KOIKI, KOIKI...
PIPE TOBACCO IN THIS DAY AND AGE!
YOSHIOKA-SAN IS THE ONLY ONE WHO STILL SMOKES THAT NOW.
JUST TELL YOSHIOKA-SAN TO BRING IT BACK.
AH, BUT ...
WELL YOU SHOULD TAKE AN UMBRELLA THEN.


YOU TELL YOSHIOKA-SAN THAT IF HE KEEPS SMOKING SO MUCH HIS BOILER WILL EXPLODE AGAIN.

OK, TWO PACKS OF KOIKI.
THAT'LL BE ¥651.
Koiki

EH? WHICH ONE?
UMM... THAT TOBACCO OVER THERE...



OH.
"SHH"
"SHH"
"SHH"
"CLUNK"
THAT WAS QUICK.
AS EXPECTED OF YOSHI-OKA-SAN.
SORRY, I WAS LATE DUE TO EVENING SHOWERS.
AH... WELCOME BACK.
NO, IT'S FINE.
I JUST USED OF ONE THOSE OLD WOODEN GATES I FOUND LYING AROUND.
IF IT LEAKS, LET ME KNOW.

ANYWAY, HERE.
OH, THAT'S THE RIGHT STUFF.
SO THIS WOODEN GATE STILL HASN'T BEEN THROWN OUT YET, HUH...
THUMP
?
WOW!
RUSTLE

Wakaba
RUSTLE
WAH!
MAYUKO-CHAAAN!!
PHONE CALL!
YOUR MOTHER'S CALLING FROM YOUR HOME.

YOU DIDN'T NEED TO RUSH SO MUCH.
OK, A PHONE CALL...
AH!
OW, OW...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, THOSE THINGS ARE EXPENSIVE.
EVEN THE BASIC RATE IS...
YEAH... SORRY I HAVEN'T CALLED YOU...
HUH? A CELL PHONE?
HELLO, MOM?
YEAH, IT'S ME.

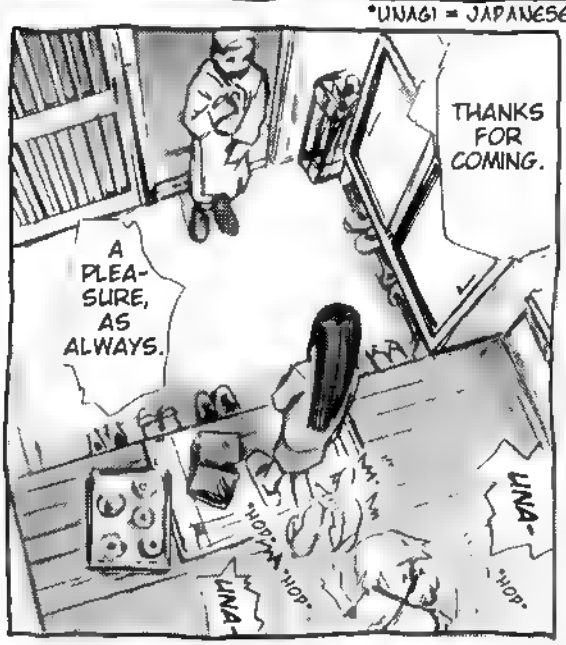
SORRY, WOULD YOU MIND IF I BORROW THE PHONE FOR A BIT?
YEAH... UM, HOLD ON A SECOND.
BESIDES THAT, HOW ARE THINGS OVER THERE?
IS TOMOYA GOING TO SCHOOL PROPERLY?
HUH? ...YEAH.
NO, IT'S FINE. YEAH, I EAT WELL, DON'T WORRY.
YEAH... YEAH... I SEE.
HIS ATTENDANCE RATE, HUH...
YEAH, I'M THE HEALTH-IEST HERE.

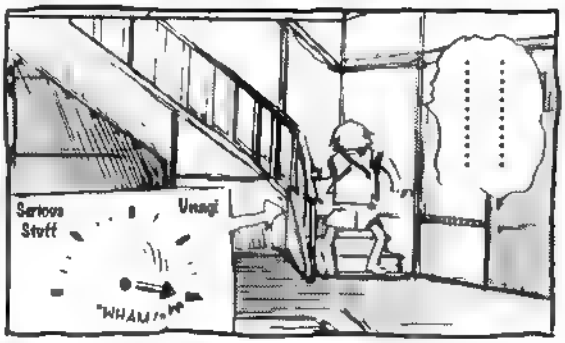
OH, HE'S THERE?
HOLD ON A SEC.
IS TOMOYA AT THE HOSPITAL NOW?
...MMM, SORRY ABOUT THAT, I'LL BUY A PHONE SOONER OR LATER.
IT'S YOUR BIG SIS
JUST REMEMBER TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE DOCTOR.
AND DON'T BE SECRETLY THROWING YOUR MEDICINE AWAY AGAIN, OK?
I'D LIKE TO GO TOO...
AHAHA, SAME AS YOU.
YEAH... YOU STILL WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL RIGHT?

SORRY, THAT WAS A LONG CALL.
"THUMP"
"THUMP"
"THUMP"
YEAH.
IS EVERY-THING OK?
I HAVEN'T CALLED FOR SUCH A LONG TIME, IT SEEMS LIKE THEY WANTED TO HEAR MY VOICE.
.....
KA-THUMP
KA-THUMP

DAMN YOU !!!
GRRRRRRRRRRRRR
LOOK!!
LOOK AT THESE BLISTERS !!!
REACH
WHILST YOU WERE WANDERING AROUND SOMEWHERE, I HAD TO WORK MY ASS OFF!!
MAYU?
.....
"THUMP"
"THUMP"
OH, SORRY...
.....

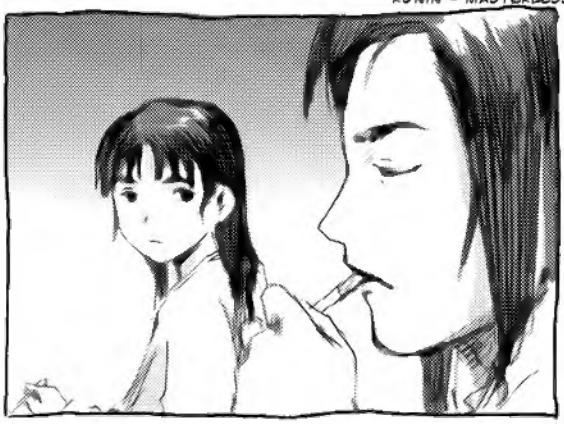
*UNAGI = JAPANESE EEL

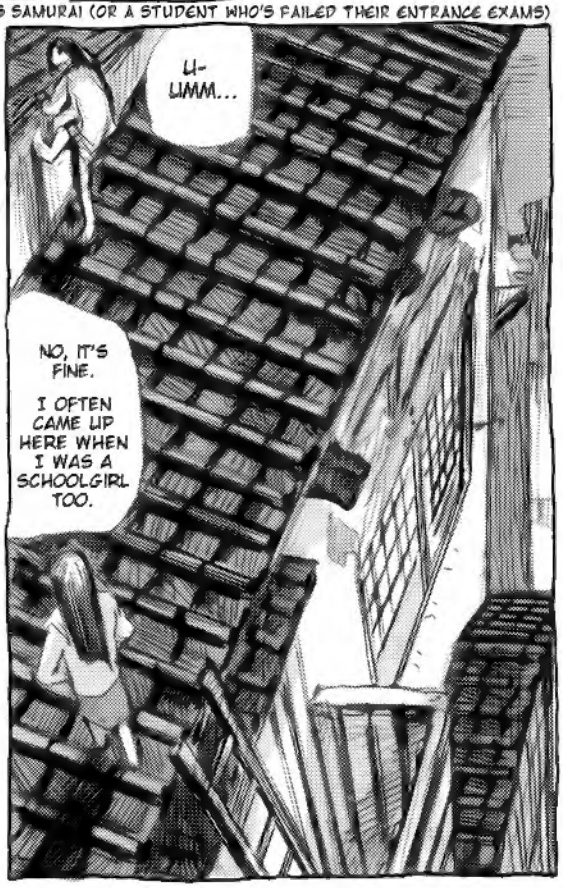


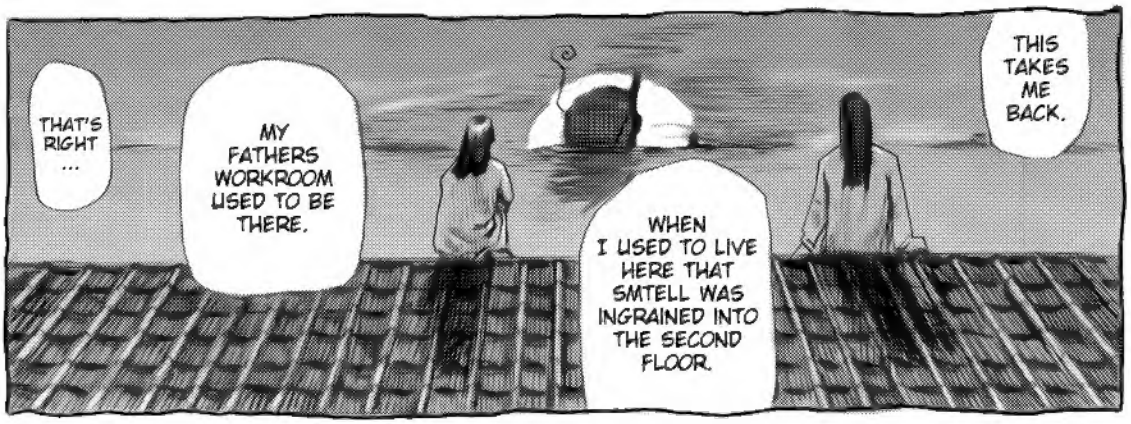


PETTY!
I'M TAKING THE BIGGEST ONE!!
WHAT AM I DOING...?
BUT NOW SINCE I'VE COME BACK HERE I FIND MYSELF REMINISCING ABOUT MY COUNTRYSIDE HOME.
FOR A WHILE AFTER I MOVED TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, I'D GET HOMESICK FOR THIS SCENERY.

* RONIN = MASTERLESS SAMURAI (OR A STUDENT WHO'S FAILED THEIR ENTRANCE EXAMS)





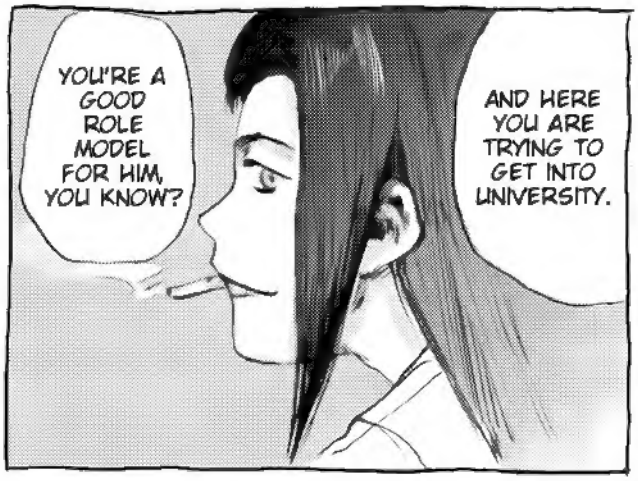

THAT'S RIGHT ...
MY FATHERS WORKROOM USED TO BE THERE.
WHEN I USED TO LIVE HERE THAT SMTELL WAS INGRAINED INTO THE SECOND FLOOR.
THIS TAKES ME BACK.

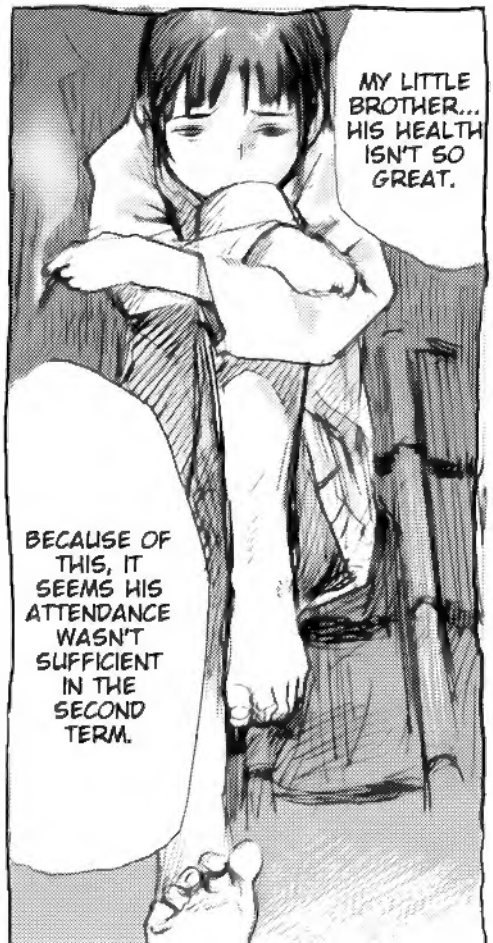
I HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT WHAT TO DO...
GET INTO A GOOD UNIVERSITY, GET EMPLOYED AT A GOOD COMPANY, THEN MAYBE HELP OUT WITH THINGS AT HOME.

KOTOMO-SAN, DID YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR AMBITIONS WHEN YOU WERE AT SCHOOL?
HMM...
I WANTED TO WORK WITH MOVIES.

I THINK IT'S PROBABLY FINE.
BUT WHAT IF HE HAS TO REPEAT A YEAR?
IT MIGHT BE HARD FOR HIM TO MAKE FRIENDS.
STUFF LIKE THAT.

HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED BACK HOME?


AND HERE YOU ARE TRYING TO GET INTO UNIVERSITY.
YOU'RE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR HIM, YOU KNOW?

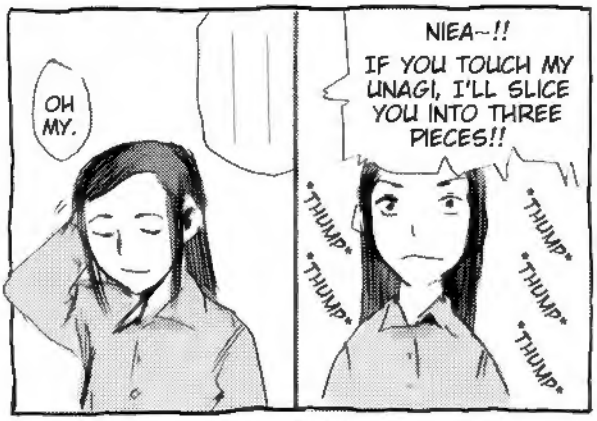

MY LITTLE BROTHER... HIS HEALTH ISN'T SO GREAT.
BECAUSE OF THIS, IT SEEMS HIS ATTENDANCE WASN'T SUFFICIENT IN THE SECOND TERM.

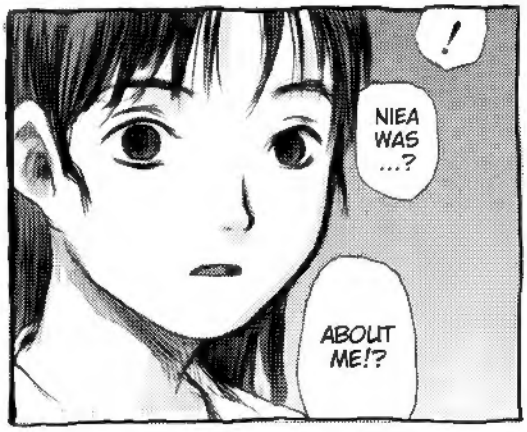
OH YEAH.
I GOT UNAGI FOR DINNER FOR EVERYONE.
OH!
CAN I REALLY HAVE SOME?
IT'S A SPECIAL TREAT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, I EXPECT YOU TO WORK HARD TOMORROW!!
YOU GOT IT!
Serious stuff
Unagi
WHAM

HUH.
I GUESS SO...

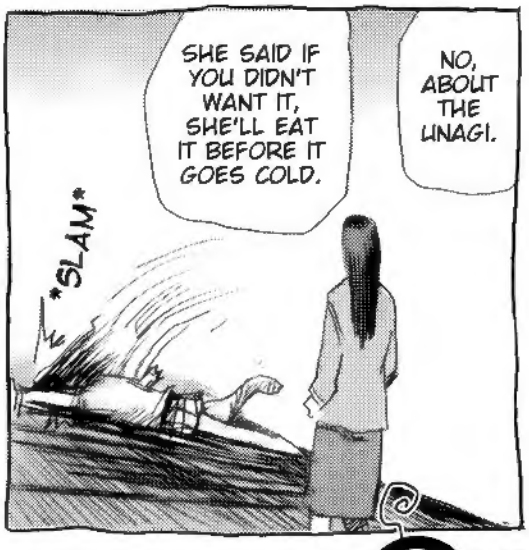
YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID SO SOONER !!!

OH YEAH... YOU KNOW, NIEA-CHAN WAS PRETTY WORRIED.


OH MY.
NIEA~!!
IF YOU TOUCH MY UNAGI, I'LL SLICE YOU INTO THREE PIECES!!
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP


!
NIEA WAS ...?
ABOUT ME!?

I SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED.
END


NO, ABOUT THE UNAGI.
SHE SAID IF YOU DIDN'T WANT IT, SHE'LL EAT IT BEFORE IT GOES COLD.
SLAM

第3話-b END

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